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NEWS

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COED TRACK TEAM

BY Ron Pierre
UM INFORMATION SERVICES

MISSOULA---

At 5 p.m., when most University of Montana coeds are thinking about dates, studying or playing a few records, eight other coeds are out on the cindertrack wondering if they can run faster.

The latter are members of the newly reorganized UM Women's Track Team. They compete under sanctioned rules of the Amateur Athletic Union and they all take their past-time seriously. The squad is sponsored by the Women's Recreational Association, and women participating in the program are given physical education credit.

The team includes: Kathleen G. Henry, Annandale, Va.; Pam C. Brandis, Corvallis; Pam M. Hallock, Peggy A. Burton and Laura G. Hodge, Missoula; Kerry Evlen, Belgrade, and Charlene J. Horak, Dutton.

Each girl competes as a member of the team, as well as a participant in one of the relay events. They also participate in individual events such as the discuss, long jump, high jump, javelin and 50-100-440-880 yard runs. Mrs. Francis Heppler of Missoula serves as instructional assistant for the girls, and Miss Ann Johnson instructs the coeds in field events.

The WRA track program began last year, but coeds didn't organize into a team. They worked out by themselves, and competed in meets as WRA members. This year, however, the women decided to organize a team.

The first step was recruiting participants, and this was done by a notice in the Montana Kaimin, UM student newspaper. The eight girls who showed up for practice worked out arrangements with the physical education department to offer credit for women's track, which is now a physical education course on the same level with all UM varsity sports.

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Last year WRA sponsored a Missoula Invitational Girls Track Meet, and the team has rescheduled the meet again this year for May 18. Prior to local competition, the UM squad will compete in the open division at the Kalispell Invitational Meet, one week before they compete on the Missoula campus track.

The girls dress in sweatshirts, shorts and sneakers for their nightly practice sessions and wear pretty much the same outfits for competition.

A practice session for the girl's team : greatly resembles a men's workout, in that the girls complain about the same pains and troubles as do their male counterparts.

"I think I could run faster," said Miss Hallock. "But I've got shin splints so bad, it just hurts me to move."

The women chatter about how they are going to do in competition and they try to iron out some of their personal problems dealing with form, style, distance and speed.

"Laura, you've got to quit stopping just before you throw," said Miss Johnson, talking to Miss Hodge. "You've got to get more distance out of the throw, so you've got to come up to the line fast and then get rid of the javelin quick."

Miss Horak, a freshman, was running down the long-jump track taking practice jumps. She'd scratch the asphalt with every step, then leap kicking and squirming into the air, her face grimacing all the time. After each jump, she'd pick herself up, smooth out the sand in the pit, and then go back to jump again.

These practice sessions go on for about two hours nightly, and each girl works on her own speciality about three-fourths of the time. Each workout begins with an exercise session and a short warm up. Then the girls split up. Some run laps on the track, others throw the discuss, and others high jump.

About the time the sun is casting shadows over the west bleachers on Dornblazer Field, eight tired coeds carry their equipment off the field and carefully store it for the next practice. It's hard work, especially for coeds, but they all smile and admit the effort is worthwhile.